

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough review of the present application, and respectfully request reconsideration in light of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-15, and 17-21 are pending in the application. Claim 16 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Several other claims have been amended to better define the claimed invention. New claim 21 has been added to provide Applicants with the scope of protection to which they are believed entitled. The amended/added claims find solid support in, at least, the original drawings. No new matter has been introduced through the foregoing amendments.

The new grounds of rejection relying on *Nystrand* (U.S. Patent No. 3,924,627) are noted. Basically, the Examiner is reading *Nystrand*'s elements 14 and 16 on the claimed first folding guide lines, elements 17 and 19 on the claimed second folding guide lines, and elements 18 and 20 on the claimed third folding guide lines. The reference, as interpreted by the Examiner, does not appear to fairly teach or suggest all limitations of the finally rejected independent claims. Notwithstanding the above, Applicants have amended the independent claims to specifically define over *Nystrand*, solely for the purpose of expediting prosecution.

In particular, independent claim 1 now recites, among other things, that "said body fluid absorbent assembly is folded inwardly along said first and second folding guide lines to define said folded portions." In other words, the claimed body fluid absorbent assembly is folded inwardly along the second folding guide lines. The added limitation finds support in at least Figs. 4, 6, 7 and the original language of claim 1 (i.e., "by folding inward respective sectors"). *Nystrand* does not teach or suggest the newly claimed feature, because, as can be seen in Fig. 4 of *Nystrand* (see attached *Exhibit A* which is an annotated version of Figs. 1 and 4 of *Nystrand*), the prior art article is folded outwardly along "second folding guide lines" 17 and 19. Differently speaking, the claimed absorbent assembly is folded in the same manner (i.e., inwardly) along the first and second folding guide lines, whereas in *Nystrand* the article is folded in different manners along the first folding guide lines 14, 16 (i.e., inwardly) and the second folding guide lines 17, 19 (i.e., outwardly). See again Fig. 4 in *Exhibit A*. Thus amended independent claim 1 is patentable over *Nystrand*.

Independent claims 11 and 20 now include similar limitations, i.e., “said body fluid absorbent assembly is folded inwardly along said first and second folding guide lines,” and are believed patentable over *Nystrand* for at least the reasons advanced above with respect to amended claim 1.

Withdrawal of the rejections of independent claims 1, 11 and 20, as well as all claims dependent therefrom, in view of the above amendments and arguments is now believed appropriate and therefore respectfully requested.

As to claims 12, 13, Applicants respectfully submit that *Nystrand* fails to teach or suggest the claim feature that “an entirety of said rear/front non-folded portion extends continuously without being folded from one of the transversely opposite side edges of said body fluid absorbent assembly to the other, and from the second/first folding guide lines to the rear/front end edge of said body fluid absorbent assembly.” As can be seen in Fig. 1 of attached *Exhibit A*, in the cross-hatched region X between the “second folding guide lines” 17, 19 and the rear edge 11, there are folding guide lines 13 and 15 and, hence, it cannot be said that the entire region X extends continuously without being folded in the presently claimed manner.

As to claim 19, the Examiner’s suggestion or motivation to modify *Nystrand*, i.e., “Placement of the transverse folding guide line towards the front region of the art would provide greater coverage of the rear end of a wearer,” is noted. The Examiner’s suggestion or motivation to modify *Nystrand* is improper as being evidentially unsupported. The Examiner is kindly asked to either cite a reference or references of good date showing that at the time the present invention was made, it was known in the art to place the transverse folding guide line towards the front region as presently claimed, or to withdraw the obviousness rejection.

New claim 21 is considered patentable at least by virtue of its dependency on independent claim 20.

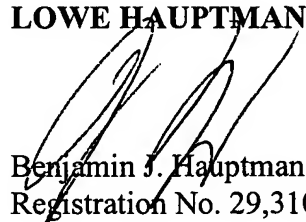
Each of the Examiner’s rejections has been traversed/overcome. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are now in condition for allowance. Early and favorable indication of allowance is courteously solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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